

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
MCT-01 /067 W
-----044904 080413Z /66
R 061610Z APR 78
FM AMCONSUL MILAN
TO AMEMBASSY ROME
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 5938

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 MILAN 0534

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT IT
SUBJECT: MILAN MEASURES MORO IMPACT

SUMMARY. SURVEY OF LEADING MILAN NATIONAL OPINION MAKERS
REVEALS UNANIMOUS CONCLUSION THAT ITALIAN POST-WAR POLITICS
HAS TURNED PAGE. AN ERA HAS ENDED AND SO, BELIEVE ALL,
HAS ROLE OF MORO WITH SERIOUS IMPLICATIONS FOR DC. END SUMMARY

1. CONSULATE HAS NOW COMPLETED SERIES OF DOZEN INTERVIEWS
WITH MOST IMPORTANT LOCAL OPINION LEADERS AND DC POLITICIANS
TO DETERMINE THEIR ESTIMATE OF POLITICAL SITUATION FOLLOWING
MORO LETTER OF MARCH 29 URGING NEGOTIATION FOR HIS RELEASE.
INCLUDED WERE EDITORS OF THREE NATIONAL DAILIES, DC PRESIDENT
OF REGION, DC SECRETARY, SOCIALISTS ACOMMUNISTS AMONG OTHERS.

2. WE DISCOVER UNBROKEN UNANIMITY FOR VIEW THAT MORO
KIDNAPPING HAS ENDED ERA OF POST-WAR ITALIAN HISTORY,
POSSIBLY END OF FIRST ITALIAN REPUBLIC. ACCORDING
TO BOTH EDITOR CONSERVATIVE FINANCIAL DAILY 24 ORE AND TO
LEADING POLITICAL WRITER FOR LEFT-WING REPUBBLICA.
WHILE ALL AGREE THAT PAGE HAS TURNED, EQUALLY AGREE
THAT OUTLOOK MORE THAN EVER OBSCURE. YET SOME HARD
CONCLUSIONS ALREADY IN.

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3. FIRST, MORO IS PROBABLY POLITICALLY FINISHED WHETHER
HE SURVIVES PHYSICALLY OR NOT. ON LATTER POINT ESTIMATES
VARY. ON FORMER, RANGE IS FROM ABSOLUTELY FINISHED TO
VIRTUALLY SO. ALL POINT TO TWO MORO LETTERS AS HAVING
DESTROYED HIS REPUTATION. EVEN THOUGH PROBABLY EXTRACTED
BY FORCE, PLEADING TONE MAKES MORO APPEAR WEAK. INCON-

CEIVABLE, SAID CATHOLIC CORRIERE EDITOR, THAT SUCH A MAN COULD NOW BE ELECTED PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC. ALL AGREE THAT DESTRUCTION OF MORO IS A BRIGATE ROSSE GOAL SUBSTANTIALY ACCOMPLISHED.

4. SECOND, DC AND GOVERNMENT SERIOUSLY DISCREDITED. FAILURE OF POLICE AFTER MORE THAN 20 DAYS TO ARREST A SINGLE SUSPECT LINKED TO CASE - EVEN ONE OF PRESUMABLY LARGE NUMBER INVOLVED IN SIMULTANEOUS DELIVERY OF TERRORIST MESSAGES - IS TAKEN AS SIGN OF ITS INADEQUACY. WHILE REPUBBLICA WRITER RECALLED SIMILAR DIFFICULTIES OF FRG AT TIME OF SCHLEYER CASE, GENERALLY REACTION IS THAT GOVERNMENT, MINISTER OF INTERIOR AND POLICE HAVE GIVEN FURTHER PROOF OF DC INCOMPETENCE.

5. THIRD, TERRORISM IS HERE TO STAY. NONE OF OUR CONTACTS BELIEVES THAT BRIGATE ROSSE CAN BE ROUNDED UP AND PUT OUT OF BUSINESS. THEY VOLUNTEER THAT ITALY MUST BEGIN TO LEARN TO LIVE WITH TERRORISM FOR YEARS TO COME.

6. FOURTH, RELATED IS GENERAL IMPRESSION THAT BRIGATE ROSSE ARE GAINING GROUND. DEMONSTRATION OF IMPOTENCE OF STATE SAID TO ENCOURAGE YOUNG RADICALS TO BELIEVE THAT TERRORISTS, AFTER ALL, MAY BE RIGHT IN THINKING THEY CAN PREVAIL. WIDESPREAD APPEARANCE OF PRO-TERRORIST
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GRAFFITI, OF ANTI-MORO GAGS, AND DEMONSTRATIONS OF EXTRA PARLIAMENTARY FOLLOWERS DESCRIBED AS SIGNS THAT BR HAVE GAINED BY OPERATION SO FAR.

7. FIFTH, FUTURE OF DC HAS SUDDENLY BECOME TOTALLY UNPREDICTABLE. ASSUMING MORO IS GONE, PHYSICALLY OR POLITICALLY, LEADERSHIP OF PARTY UP FOR GRABS. AND NO ONE BUT FORLANI, IN WHOM NONE OF OUR INTERLOCUTORS EXPRESSED ANY FAITH, SEEMED TO THEM LIKELY. MOREOVER, PRESIDENCY OF REPUBLIC ALSO BECOMES WIDE OPEN WITH NO OBVIOUS REPLACEMENT FOR MORO. REMOVAL OF MORO ALSO RISKS SPLIT IN DC OVER COMMUNIST ISSUE AS HE SEEN AS ONLY LEADER OF STATURE ADEQUATE HOLD FACTIONS TOGETHER AND FIND COMMON GROUND WITH PCI.

8. IT IS IN THOSE TERMS THAT OUR INFORMANTS HERE SEE FUNDAMENTAL CHANGE IN ITALIAN SCENE SINCE KIDNAPPING.

9. ALL EQUALLY STRONG IN CONVICTION THAT STATE MUST NOT NEGOTIATE WITH TERRORISTS FOR MORO RELEASE - EVEN IF CHOICE IS HIS CERTAIN DEATH. REGIONAL PRESIDENT GOLFARI (DC) DC PROVINCIAL SECRETARY FRIGERIO

AND OTHER DC LEADERS AS WELL AS PRESS
AGREE THAT AFTER MUCH SOUL-SEARCHING, DC IS NOW DUG
IN ON THIS POSITION. AND THERE ALSO SAID TO BE
STRONG OPPOSITION WITHIN VATICAN TO POPE'S INITIAL
READINESS TO SERVE AS INTERMEDIARY. HOWEVER, THERE IS

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MCT-01 /067 W
-----044672 072230Z /66

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GENERAL SUSPICION OF SECRET NEGOTIATIONS WITH TERRORISTS.
BY FAMILY TO SAVE MORO BY BARGAIN, BY DC FRIENDS TO GAIN
TIME IN DESPERATE HOPE THAT POLICE WILL SOMEHOW DISCOVER
HIDING PLACE. NONE OF OUR CONTACTS BELIEVES THAT DC
OR GOVERNMENT COULD OR WOULD TRADE MORO FOR IMPRISONED
TERRORISTS - PARTLY BECAUSE POLITICAL BACKLASH FOR DC
WOULD BE STAGGERING IN THEIR ESTIMATE. IN FACT, MACABRE
AS IT MAY BE, WE ARE TOLD THAT VARIOUS DC MPS SAYING THEY
WOULD PREFER MORO DEAD TO DEPRIVE TERRORISTS OF THEIR
MISCHIVIOUS LEVERAGE.

10. OUTLOOK DESCRIBED AS VERY GRIM WITH LOCKHEED TRIAL
OPENING, CURCIO TRIAL PROCEEDING, SOME ADMINISTRATIVE ELECTIONS
IN MAY, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC TO BE CHOSEN IN FALL,
NEW NATIONAL ELECTIONS EXPECTED IN SPRING 1979 AND
EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT ELECTIONS THAT SUMMER.

11. DI BELLA MUSED THAT FATE OF FIRST REPUBLIC HANGS
ON SOME COP STUMBLING ON HIDING PLACE. A POLICE SUCCESS,
EVEN IF MORO KILLED IN SHOOT OUT, WOULD TOTALLY CHANGE
VERY GRAVE OUTLOOK.

12. GRAVE FOR OUR CONTACTS IN PART BECAUSE THEY WORRIED
ABOUT INCREASED PROBABILITY THAT PCI WILL BE BROUGHT

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INTO GOVERNMENT. THEY AGREE THAT UNDERLYING THRUST OF TERRORISM IS TO MAKE PCI SEEM MORE NECESSARY TO SAVE STATE IN FACE OF DC INADEQUACY. NO ONE SEEMS TO DOUBT THAT PCI COULD RESTORE LAW AND ORDER WHICH IS EVER BUILDING DEMAND OF PUBLIC. SO FAR PCI SAID TO HAVE MADE NO EFFORT TO BE BROUGHT INTO CABINET AND NONE OF OUR INTERLOCUTORS EXPECTED THAT BARRING SOME SHARP WORSENING OF SITUATION - WHICH NONE WOULD EXCLUDE.

13. WORKING AGAINST PCI INCLUSION IN CABINET WAS ELIMINATION OF MORO. HE ALONE HAD PRESTIGE AND SKILL TO HOLD DC TOGETHER AT SAME TIME MAKING DEAL WITH PCI. IN HIS ABSENCE, GIORNALE EDITOR SURMISED, DC COULD WELL TURN ITS BACK ON PCI IN MAJORITY IN PREFERENCE FOR NEW NATIONAL ELECTIONS. OTHERS THOUGHT DC HAD CROSSED THAT RUBICON AND IN FACT FOUND PCI MORE ESSENTIAL THAN EVER.

14. ELECTORAL IMPACT OF MORO CASE GENERALLY SEEN AS ACCENTUATING POLARIZATION ALREADY IN PROGRESS ALTHOUGH NONE VERY CONFIDENT OF ESTIMATE UNTIL MORO DRAMA FULLY PLAYED OUT. ARGUMENT WAS THAT VOTER, FEARFUL OF CHAOS AND VIOLENCE WOULD TURN TO ONE OF MASS PARTIES TO RESTORE ORDER. WHILE DC REGIONAL PRESIDENT BELIEVED PCI LOSING SUPPORT DUE TO BRIGATE ROSSE ORIGIN IN MARXISM AND ITS CHAMPIONSHIP OF COMMUNISM, THAT HYPOTHESIS HAD NO OTHER SUPPORT. ACCORDING TO OTHERS, BRIGATE ROSSE AND PCI LONG KNOWN AS ENEMIES AND NO CONFUSION. MOREOVER, PCI VOTER, LIKE VOTERS FOR PSI, PSDI, AND OTHER MINOR GROUPS IS MARXIST WHO DOESN'T BELIEVE MARXISM EQUALS TERRORISM. NEW INFLUX OF MIDDLE OF ROAD VOTES GOING TO PCI COMES FROM PEOPLE OF WHOM BACK PCI PRECISELY BECAUSE THEY BELIEVE IT WILL RESTORE LAW AND ORDER.

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15. ONE SERIOUS ERROR IN PCI HANDLING OF CASE, GOLFARI BELIEVE, WAS CRITICISM OF POLICE ROUND UP EARLIER IN WEEK WHEN THERE SEEMED LITTLE GROUND FOR SOME ARRESTS. PCI AND LEFT IN GENERAL CRITICAL OF THAT OPERATION. BUT THIS COULD IMPAIR PCI IMAGE AS SYMBOL OF LAW AND ORDER WHEN, ACCORDING TO SOME HERE, PUBLIC WANTS TOUGH REPRESSION OF TERRORISTS AND NOT MUCH WORRIED ABOUT LEGALITIES. CONTRARY VIEW TAKEN BY REPUBBLICA MAN WHO SAID INDISCRIMINATE ROUND-UP LAYED INTO HANDS OF TERRORISTS BY GIVING THEM EVIDENCE THAT POLICE

WERE OPPRESSIVE.

17. SUCH WAS CLIMATE AS WE MEASURED IT IN MILAN AT CLOSE
OF DAY, APRIL 5.

16. SOURCES OF TERRORISM CONSTANT THEME WITH FREQUENT ASSUR-
ANCE THAT ITALIANS TOO UNSKILLED OR TOO DECENT TO CARRY OUT MORO
OPERATION. DC SECRETARY, LONG TIME POLITICO, INSISTS TERRORISTS
ARE BACKED BY SOVIETS THROUGH CZECHS TO SABOTAGE PCI WHICH HAS
BECOME TOO INDEPENDENT FOR THEM. FRIGERIO CONCEDED, HOWEVER, THAT
IF THIS IS SOVIET STRATEGY, IT IS HAVING REVERSE EFFECT BY
BRINGING PCI CLOSER TO GOVERNMENT.FINA

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: SURVEYS, PUBLIC OPINION POLLS, POLITICAL SITUATION, POLITICAL PARTIES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 06 apr 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978MILAN00534
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780151-1069
Format: TEL
From: MILAN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780486/aaaacuus.tel
Line Count: 236
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 5c8e5cb5-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 19 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3055531
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MILAN MEASURES MORO IMPACT SUMMARY. SURVEY OF LEADING MILAN NATIONAL OPINION MAKERS REVEALS UNANIMOUS CONCLUSION THAT ITALIAN POST-WAR
TAGS: PINT, IT
To: ROME
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/5c8e5cb5-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014